

Town of Pinewald  
New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail  
State Route 618, .5 mile West of U.S. Highway 9  
Pinewald  
Ocean County  
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-1020

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NJ  
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of Interior  
Washington D.C. 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
TOWN OF PINEWALD

HABS No. NJ-1020

- Location: New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail, State Route 618, .5 mile West of U.S. Highway 9, Pinewald, Ocean County, New Jersey.
- Significance: Pinewald, originally known as Barnegat Park, was designed by Colonel Will Farrow for retired members of the military. In the early twentieth century, the military camp was transformed by a developer who envisioned a luxurious resort town catering to wealthy urban vacationers.
- History: In 1889 Gustav Kobbe described a new town that the U.S. Navy was constructing in the pinelands near Double Trouble State Park. Barnegat Park, "comprises some 300 acres, around and through which flow pine and cedar creeks. At the head of the former is Crystal Lake, a pretty sheet of water."<sup>1</sup> Kobbe continued, praising the town's fine system of wide roads, named after army and navy officers, facilitating the enjoyment of both pines and bay.

Originally designed by Colonel Will Farrow for retired members of the military, Barnegat Park was soon transformed by the utopian ideas of B. W. Sangor. Sangor, a New York and Miami developer, imagined a vast and luxurious resort town catering to wealthy urban vacationers. In 1928-29, about 8,000 lots were sold in Pinewald, this "new-type, residential, recreational city-of-the sea-and-pines."<sup>2</sup> The developers immediately began construction of the Pinewald pavilion and pier at the end of Butler Avenue. The Royal Pines hotel, a \$1.175 million investment facing Crystal Lake, was built on the site of an earlier hotel dating back to the days of Barnegat Park.<sup>3</sup>

Rumor and mystery surround the eight-story concrete-and-steel building rising above the scrubby pines. Said to have been constructed by Russian architect W. Oltar-Jevsky in the early 1920s, the Royal Pines is the site of intrigue. Al Capone might have frequented its halls or, perhaps, even ventured beneath the lake in tunnels especially designed for smuggling "package goods." One newspaper article interviewed an unidentified man who claimed that "in the early 1930s the then Royal Pines Hotel was frequented by society's elite who, for \$1.90 a drink, consumed prohibition liquor under the watchful eye of men who had guns strapped under their coats."<sup>4</sup>

After the stockmarket crash, the hotel was purchased for \$50,000 and converted into a nursing home, eventually becoming the Pinewald Medical Center, and now the

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<sup>1</sup> Gustav Kobbe, The New Jersey Coast and Pines. Short Hills: By the author, 1889; reprint, Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1977), 69.

<sup>2</sup> Lucille Glosque, Berkeley Township: The First 100 Years (Berkeley Township Centennial Commission, 1975), 48-49.

<sup>3</sup> Glosque, 48-49.

<sup>4</sup> Tim Deady, "The Royal Pines, A Grand Oasis in the Pine Barrens," Heritage 76 (June 20, 1976), G3.

Bayview Convalescent Center. Brochures advertising the previous Medical Center facility continued to emphasize its beneficial location.

You are in the pines yet at the sea. Relax on the Promenade, if you wish, collecting your coat of tan. Breathe in the salty freshness of the ocean from the deck of a sailboat across the bay. Swim in the cameolike Crystal Lake on which the Royal Pines fronts.<sup>5</sup>

Though the building interior has been modernized, the dilapidated exterior recalls the hotel's grandeur. The second floor of the hotel opens out onto a porch and bridge crossing the road to an abandoned lakeside pavilion. Twin white medallions depicting the hotel and the Butler Street pavilion are embedded in the concrete above the porch. Stucco cornucopias, fixed atop either side of the bridge walls serve as mocking reminders of a more plentiful past.

Prepared by: Sarah Allaback  
HABS Historian  
Summer 1991

- Sources: Deady, Tim. "The Royal Pines, A Grand Oasis in the Pine Barrens." Heritage 76, 20 June 1976.
- Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration. New Jersey: A Guide to its Present and Past. New York: Public Library of Newark and New Jersey Guild Associates, Viking Press, 1939.
- Glosque, Lucille. Berkeley Township: The First 100 Years. Berkeley Township Centennial Commission, 1975.
- Kobbe, Gustav. The New Jersey Coast and Pines. Short Hills: By the author, 1889; reprint, Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1977.
- "The Royal Pines Pinewald Medical Center." (brochure) Ocean County Historical Society Collection, Toms River.

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<sup>5</sup> The Royal Pines, "Pinewald Medical Center," brochure.

Project Information:

This project was sponsored by the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail (NJCHT) of the National Park Service, Janet Wolf, director. The documentation was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Robert Kapsch, chief, under the direction of HABS historian Sara Amy Leach, project supervisor. Three historians completed the research during summer 1991: Field supervisor Sarah Allaback (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Alfred Holden (University of Vermont), and Camille Gatza (North Carolina). David Ames (University of Delaware) made the large-format photographs. Historian, Elizabeth Harris May (George Washington University), edited the HABS reports.